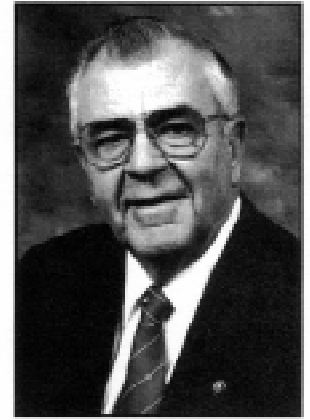


Congressman Herbert H. Bateman *AMERICA'S FIRST DISTRICT — VIRGINIA* **News**



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**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE
HERBERT H. BATEMAN, CHAIRMAN,
PANEL ON THE MERCHANT MARINE**

on the

Merchant Marine Panel's Recommendations for
H.R. 1401, the National Defense Authorization Act
for Fiscal Year 2000

The Merchant Marine Panel's recommendation consists of two parts. The first part is the annual authorization of appropriations for the U.S. Maritime Administration. It includes a \$7.6 million increase to the budget request for the US Merchant Marine Academy. This additional funding will enable the Academy to begin to address its most serious capital maintenance problems. In addition, the Panel recommended a \$25 million increase to the Title XI shipbuilding Loan Guarantee Program in order to address the potential shortfall of available shipbuilding loan guarantees. Maintaining U.S. shipbuilding capability is essential to maintaining national security readiness.

The second part consists of the Panel's recommendations for the Panama Canal Commission, including the final authorization for expenditures for the Panama Canal through the first quarter of fiscal year 2000. In addition, it contains administrative provisions related to the transfer of the Canal from the jurisdiction the United States to the Republic of Panama at the end of 1999.

I am not aware of any controversy involving these provisions. If there are any further questions, I will be happy to respond to them or refer you to the appropriate staff.

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